

Dr. Tina Barr

Course number: 200, Introduction to Poetry Writing,

Location: Room 203 Palmer Hall, 2:40-4:10 on Tuesdays and Thursdays

My office is on the 3rd floor of Palmer Hall, number 307. My phone number is 843-3979 and my email address is: TinaBarr@rhodes.edu. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or to arrange a conference.

Required Texts: *Contemporary American Poetry*, edited by Al Poulin, 6th edition, Houghton Mifflin; *Western Wind*, by John Frederick Nims, 3rd edition, McGraw Hill; *The Practice of Poetry*, edited by Robin Behn & Chase Twichell, Harper Collins, *Kinky* by Denise Duhamel

Structure of Course: We will use *Western Wind* as an introduction to poetic technique, *Contemporary American Poetry* as a resource to read the work of other poets, and *The Practice of Poetry* as a resource for writing exercises. You will read *Kinky*, by pop poet Denise Duhamel, in preparation for her reading and class visit on April 27th. The class will be conducted primarily as a workshop, that is, you will read and critique each other's work, but we will also devote some time to covering poetic technique, reading the work of contemporary poets, and you will be expected to complete writing exercises. You will also be required to give an oral report on a poet by acquainting other students with the poet's history and giving an analysis of a particular poem. You will articulate your analysis of a particular poem by writing a brief essay, which will prepare you to talk about the poem to the class. You will turn in the essay the day you give the oral report.

Workshop Format: When you have completed a poem you want to share with the class, put **two copies** in the box outside my office door, or hand them in to me. Copies will be duplicated for each class member. When copies of various students' poems are distributed, please take time to go over them and write comments on them for the student. Articulate those comments during class discussion and return your sheet to the author of the poem after we have finished.

Course Requirements: **I. Submit poems** (try to produce a poem a week; your portfolio should contain 10-14 poems or more by the end of the semester) **II. Complete required reading** assignments in all texts. **III. Complete writing exercises.** **IV. Complete Oral Report and Essay.**

Organization of Materials: *Keep a folder of all your work, including drafts.* Never dispose of drafts; print out all drafts. **This will be your portfolio**, which you will turn in **at midterm and end of term**. Separate and group the final copies, but include the work you have done for revisions. Keep another folder for all student work. All final copies of work submitted in the portfolio and to class **must be printed, never handwritten.**

Conferences: You should see me at least twice during the semester for a conference. See me in conference early in the semester and then again after midterm. Please see me more often if you have a question or would like to discuss poems that you prefer not to share with the class.

While I always endeavor to abide by the syllabus; it is a statement of course goals and we may at times run behind schedule. I will also hand out exercises and examples for you during the semester: on specific editing issues and development of poetry. Please bring up questions and issues and we can respond to them as they arise.

Week 1: 1/14 class orientation, paired interviews, in-class writing exercises.

Assignment for next week: type up and revise writing exercises we did in-class, read in *Western Wind*, chapters 1 and 2, and come to class with questions, read in Poulin anthology the work of **Elizabeth Bishop**. Please peruse the Poulin anthology and fill out request forms for a poet whose work you would like to discuss for the oral report.

Week 2: 1/19 & 1/21 turn in results of writing exercises and oral report requests, submit any other poems to Dr. Barr for workshop discussion, discuss chapters 1 and 2 on imagery and figurative language in *WW* in relation to Bishop's work.

Assignment for next week: Read chapter 3 in *WW* and the work of Gwendolyn Brooks in the Poulin anthology. Select one of the exercises in Part 1 of the *Practice of Poetry* text and complete it. Hand in the exercise next Tuesday, identifying the name of the exercise at the top of the page. Remember to hand in 2 copies of all poems you turn in for class discussion.

Week 3: 1/26 & 1/28, discussion of **Gwendolyn Brooks's** work in conjunction with the topic of the use of symbol in chapter 3 in *WW*. Discussion of student poems. Oral report assignments given out. Turn in writing exercise.

Assignment for next week: Read chapter 4 on irony and paradox in *WW* and the work of **James Dickey**. Choose another writing exercise from *The Practice of Poetry's* part 1 and hand it in, indicating at the top of the page which exercise you chose.

Week 4: 2/2 & 2/4 discussion of chapter 4 and irony and paradox in Dickey's work, student work and first oral report. Hand in writing exercise. **2/4: Reading by Tina Barr, 7pm, Christian Brothers University, Buckman Hall**

Assignment for next week: Read chapter 5 in *WW* and the work of Robert Hass in the Poulin anthology. Choose a writing exercise in part 3 **A** in *The Practice of Poetry*. Continue to identify which assignment you did at the top of the page you turn in.

Week 5: 2/9 & 2/11 turn in writing assignment. Discuss chapter 5 on emotion and sentimentality in regard to **Robert Hass's** work. Oral reports and student poems.

Assignment for next week: Read chapter 6 in *WW* and the work of Yusef Komunyakaa in the Poulin Anthology. Choose a writing exercise in part 3 **B** of *The Practice of Poetry*. **Portfolios are due on 2/23; begin to prepare yours.**

Week 6: 2/16 & 2/18, Turn in writing exercise, discuss student poems, present oral reports, discuss the work of **Yusef Komunyakaa** and chapter 6. **Portfolios due on 2/23. No exceptions.**

Assignment for next week: Read chapter 7 in *WW* on the use of sound and read the work of Li-Young Lee in the Poulin anthology. Turn in poems. **Portfolio due this coming week.**

Week 7: 2/23 & 2/25, Turn in **Portfolio**. Discuss student poems, present oral reports, discuss the work of poet **Li-Young Lee** in conjunction with chapter 7 of *WW*.

Assignment for next week: Read chapter 8 in *WW*. Complete the *Twenty Little Poetry Projects* assignment on page 119 of *The Practice of Poetry*.

Week 8: 3/2 & 3/4, turn in writing assignment, discussion, in-class exercises

Spring Break.

Week 9: 3/16 & 3/18 turn in results of in-class exercises, oral reports

Assignment for next week: Read chapter 9 in *WW* and read the work of Roethke. Pay special attention to chapter 9 on rhythm while thinking about the Roethke section in the Poulin anthology. Choose a writing exercise from part 6 of *The Practice of Poetry*.

Week 10: 3/23 & 3/25, discuss **Roethke's work** and chapter 9 in *WW*. Turn in poems, Oral reports, continued discussion of student poems.

Assignment for next week: Read chapter 10 on patterns of rhythm in poetry. Read the work of Gary Snyder in the Poulin anthology. Choose one of the exercises in part 5 in *The Practice of Poetry* on organization and structure.

Week 11: 3/30, turn in poems, discussion of student poems, oral reports and discussion of **Gary Snyder's** work and chapter 10.

Complete the following assignment over Easter Break:

Read chapter 12, (chapter 11 is optional) on fixed forms. Read the work of Richard Wilber in the Poulin anthology. Work on your poems and write a poem in a fixed form. (sonnet, sestina, villanelle, pantoum, ghazal, haiku, etc.) You can use *The Practice of Poetry* to write a pantoum, villanelle, or ghazal if you like, pages 198-205.

Week 12: 4/6 & 4/8, turn in fixed form poems, discuss chapter 12 and formal concerns in the work of **Richard Wilber**. Oral reports and student poems.

Assignment for next week: Work on your poems and read the work of James Wright in Poulin anthology.

Week 13: 4/13, No class on 4/15, make sure you have seen me in conference at least twice!!!! discussion of student poems, oral reports, discussion of James Wright.

Assignment for next week: Work on your poems and begin to **prepare final portfolio, due April 27th, no exceptions, also read the work of Denise Duhamel in *Kinky*.**

Week 14: 4/20 & 4/22, discussion of Denise Duhamel's work, discussion of student poems

Assignment for next week: **prepare final portfolio and complete reading of *Kinky*.**

Week 15: 4/27 & 4/29 Final Portfolio Due, April 27th, no exceptions. Visit by Denise Duhamel on 4/27, on 4/29: *class evaluations, class party, class reading*